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THE  
CANADIAN MILITARY

Its Organization and present condition

BY  
LIEUT.-COL. J. D. BROWN

*Commanding 57th Regt. of Militia, H. C.*

CHICAGO:

PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM T. SAWYER, GRAND RIVER AVENUE,  
CALIFORNIA, OREGON.

1873.

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PREFACE

# CANADIAN MILITIA!

Its Organization and present condition.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. DAYTON

*Commanding 37th Regt. of Militia or Halden and Rpt. Co.*



PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM T. SAWLE, "GRAND RIVER SACHEM" OFFICE,  
CALEDONIA, ONTARIO.

1873.





## PREFACE.

Military or Militia matters being generally neglected in Canada, the author of the following pages conceived the idea of making efforts to draw public attention to them, and to do so in a better manner than those of his predecessors. He writes with this same object in view.

The only apology then necessary for reprinting the "L. C." which appeared in the *Hamilton Volunteer* is, that furnished by the following extracts, one from the *Volunteer*, Mr. Langevin, acting Minister of Militia and Defence, and the *Volunteer Review* of June 21th, 1873:

"Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN agreed to a certain extent to the views for London. The intention was not to compromise the views at present. They had almost seen that it had not been so expected, and therefore the Militia Department was not of admitting young men, but criminally, the Militia Department seemed to be sending courses and a few more in position. The Department hoped to come down to a new proposition. He admitted that the Militia Department was not going to give the Militia Department to improve the system, and would not be next year when the stones purchased from the Militia would be paid for, a reduction in the expenses."

The *Volunteer Review* commenting on a note from the *Times*, says:

"We hope the *Times* will keep the subject before it needs ample discussion, as the Volunteer officers of the Commons appear to have ignored their connection with altogether."

York, October 20, 1873.



## THE CANADIAN MILITIA

### ITS ORGANIZATION AND PRESENT CONDITION

In considering the question of Canadian defence, the first difficulty that presents itself now-a-days, is that there is no regular combination and concerted action between the Imperial and the Colonial forces, and that neither Imperial nor Canadian authorities have apparently given the matter any consideration.

The Committee which in 1862 drafted what is now known as Lyson's Bill, (and of which Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir John Gait, and Sir Charles were members,) reported: "That the Militia of Canada come within the province of the General Government of the Empire, but, that, with one thousand miles of our frontier, and fifty thousand men in arms, with a reserve of three hundred thousand men, without a strong force of Regulars, and a powerful fleet of gunboats."

The report was submitted to Parliament more than ten years ago. Let us see what steps have been taken since then towards carrying out the recommendations. Sir John A. Macdonald, being head of the Government, Sir George being head of the Militia Department.

There is a nominal force of 13,000 Volunteers, scattered over the Dominion from Halifax to Montreal, and the Regulars? Where the gunboats? Where the General Government of the Empire? Where the fifty thousand reserve?

But people may say, What is the use of talking of defence by question to the front now, when everything is so calm at present? Well, there are lots of unbelievers who hold that there is no danger, and that brotherly love, assured by the Washington Treaty, is sufficient to give us more than a breathing spell for the Yankees, to get up some other business. This may be so, or not. In any case, a well-organized Militia is a necessary need for Canada; for we have already proven our inability to resist a grasping, covetous tyrant, and if we want to become a nation, and to remain reasonably well insured, we must keep up a strong and efficient military establishment, not only to secure our liberties, but to secure our independence. Knowledge of such a fact actually lessens the danger of war.



it is no such arrangement, nor any provision for such a well-ordered system of service. Some counties give a regiment, one don't give a man. Two or three townships in another county furnish both the men and the majority of the township in the same county not giving a soldier a volunteer. One place provides men and money for the outfit of the country, the other does nothing of the kind; yet the township that supplies from seventy to a hundred men per foot soldier, is not as the township that gives neither a man or a dollar; *both are equally patriotic in the eye of the law.*

Here, then, is one of the inherent defects of our militia, the quota not being regularly apportioned, the service not uniform, (a standing ground of complaint) and what adds to the weakness, that there is no system, planned or perfected, for *abstracting men from the active militia at all, plus for the Volunteers.*

Up until 1863 the volunteer militia corps were organized into companies, with the exception of Six Battalions in Upper and middle Lower Canada. In 1864 Colonel Macdonald organized the militia of companies into Battalions, paying to each a county the cost of a permanent head quarters. The difficulty of obtaining men for such a day was frequently brought to his notice and the draft of the War Bill which he prepared, recommended either the ballot or the rotation of service. Which of these alternatives the Government will take up will very soon have to be determined for, every man knows that the Volunteer Militia exists now by its own choice, and not its needs but little more indifference and neglect to dissolve it.

Turn now to the material of the Active or Volunteer Militia in cities and towns it is made up, as a rule, of mechanics, tradesmen, and clerks. In the rural district, it is composed of the farmer and his day laborers, of boatmen and millmen. The daily wages of all these workers is from a dollar and a half to three dollars and a half a day, but when they are called out for military service, they pay fifty cents a day and their rations, worth about the same, making a total of less than one-half their daily wages. This is, of course, anything understated; common laborers on railroad work are paid 12s. a day, while farm hands are offered \$10 and \$15 a month, including board. But surely the Government makes some compensation or grants some privilege to men who make such sacrifices for their country. Far from it. There is nothing provided for the soldier when they are on duty, but a forage cap, that helps the sun burn the skin off their faces, a pair of serge trousers and a pair of shoes. Everything in the shape of underclothing, boots, socks, and all the necessary articles for personal cleanliness--have to be provided by the man himself at his own expense. The consequence is, that as there is no uniformity in what the men do procure, not one man out of twenty has a pair of boots fit to march in, and I saw last season on a short march from Clifton to Niagara, nearly half a company going barefoot, and the men of two Regiments scattered, limping and straggling along the road for the whole thirteen miles.

We will next look at the organization of the Militia, and begin with the company unit.



is no such organization, nor any provision in the town of service. Some estimate the population at 1000. Two of these townships in another county have the majority of the townships in the same county volunteer. One place provides men and arms from the country, the other does nothing of the kind that supplies from twenty to a hundred men, and as the town captain gives neither a man or arms, *patrols* in the eye of the law.

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Up until 1964, the number of volunteer companies was 1,000, and the number of volunteers was 100,000. By 1970, the number of companies had fallen to 600, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 60,000. By 1975, the number of companies had fallen to 400, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 40,000. By 1980, the number of companies had fallen to 200, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 20,000. By 1985, the number of companies had fallen to 100, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 10,000. By 1990, the number of companies had fallen to 50, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 5,000. By 1995, the number of companies had fallen to 25, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 2,500. By 2000, the number of companies had fallen to 10, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 1,000. By 2005, the number of companies had fallen to 5, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 500. By 2010, the number of companies had fallen to 2, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 200. By 2015, the number of companies had fallen to 1, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 100. By 2020, the number of companies had fallen to 0, and the number of volunteers had fallen to 0.

[illegible]

We will next look at the organization of the *company* with the company unit.





A wide awake tavern keeper, or energetic young store keeper, determined to turn the country about the sentiment which prevailed all over the country in 1866. A public meeting is called and turning people are made. "The Country in danger," "God Save the Queen" (sung in all kinds of keys), and "Rule Britannia" with all manner of variations. The Femmes catch it rough (with the tongue). The meeting is not at all unwilling to have a lap at the Yankees, and it is uncommonly resolved, that Slabtown must have a Volunteer R.F. Company. Three cheers for the Queen terminates the meeting, which is immediately re-organized in the next tavern.

After a little delay and some difficulty, a sheet of foolscap, with pen and ink is procured, and volunteers press forward by the dozen. Next morning a roll of fifty or sixty names is forwarded to the Muster Department, with the request for a Service Roll and immediate inspection.

The Government, glad to get men, or there was then even, prospect of their being wanted, make no unnecessary delay, and the papers are sent on forthwith. A letter, with the magic O. H. M. S. on the envelope, renews all the previous excitement. The captain (*in cetera*) immediately calls together the company, the last man coming in on a run, lest he should be late. The condition of affairs are read, and every man signs without hesitation (they are ready then to do anything.) A week after, the company is inspected by the Colonel Major, who pays them a glowing compliment on their loyalty and fine personal appearance. The next week they are gazetted, and there you are. "The Slabtown Volunteer Rule Company, Captain Blank."

Drill is commenced forthwith, military order being made in the breast of every volunteer, and there is an average of twenty or thirty or fifty men. The captain is stern and attentive, and the company really makes wonderful progress. The rules and uniform are, for men are paraded and have a shooting match in a second company could be organized on the spot. The first year, the company is a perfect success; the next, a slight weakness is apparent; the third year, there is a decided falling off; the fourth year, the captain thinks he can muster about forty, *if he gets time enough*; the fifth year, he don't know; "the men, you see, were called out to drill last year at a bad time; a good many of them lost their boy, and some more lost their platoon, and they didn't like the way they were treated when in camp at Jericho," etc. The sixth year, the captain and ten or a dozen men are all that remain of that famous company. The novelty has worn off, the excitement died out, and nothing has been introduced as a substitute for either; and although a capital drill shed, costing some \$700 or \$800, has been erected at the company headquarters, the shed is devoted to agricultural shows. Where the tramp of armed men, and the sharp word of command could be heard a couple of nights in the week, you will now find two or three threshing machines; and where you could turn out forty men in two or three hours, you may now hunt all day and not be able to parade a dozen. Patriotism and pluck, with here and there an eye to business, was the motive power which started the volunteers; but the organization (if you choose to call it such) of all, was more or less alike, and all alike are now in the condition of the Slabtown Rifles.

























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Britain, in this colonial question, has no other ally with respect to Canada, which, eventually, we think the Imperial Government would not for a day permit to start one point in the United Kingdom, and, in consequence, the fact of her Militia or Volunteer force being increased by Regular troops, and led by Regular officers, in British North America, is the exact reverse of the original body of Volunteers, which, at the time of the Confederation, had fair notice been given that, if the troops would be withdrawn, the Militia force would be in a thorough state of efficiency, and be able to take the general defense and control, then, we are not in a position of complaint as for the general force of defense, but the one and only defense seemed to be, for some time, that the best men could be turned out of the Militia force.

To be sure, we were given to understand that Canada would be reduced to what it was before the war, quite satisfied that it should be so; but never, till Lord Grayville gave the information, that every vestige of British power and connection, should be lost from the country. Such, however, is now the case, and, under Mr. Galt's administration, we are ready to hope for the blunder of a party in the year of the hour? Certainly the organization of the Militia force, so as to prepare it for any emergency.

Now, this duty should be carried out under the control of Imperial officers, determined to do it, and the Opposition are apt to undulate in their attitude about the business, and, with a view to the care.

Party organization is carried out, and under the control of the Militia organization, that is, under the control of the Militia, from the liberty of the press, and the fact that the Militia is not only directly discussed and ventilated, but is not only discussed on both sides of the House; but let Militia men, and others, only do me seem to be, how soon they can be, and is concentrated upon the admirable conduct of the Militia. The Estimates gave that there is a great deal on some of the items, which are sure to be carried out, a day, and there, you have an average year, and the Militia.

Since 1862, there has not been the least of a Commission on the state of the Militia, and the seats in the House are so bound down by the Government, they won't embarrass the Government, where the Militia, they can accomplish nothing, attempt nothing.

Sir James Lindsay, before leaving Canada, urged the Government, the need of one or more General Officers, the Militia. Now, there is a saving clause in one of the communications, which would enable the Government to meet Sir James' recommendation, and, if returned to Canada, on the demand of the Government, the quarters are to be provided for them, &c., &c." Let us test the sincerity of this proposal, for the presence of the Regiment of Infantry, and as many Batteries of Artillery, and









was: "It was a tentative measure, and my intention was to be removed by and by."

Five years have now passed; more than \$100,000,000 have been expended; the Bill has been introduced in every country but one; other "model railroads" have been built from the outside out to our advantage; to the satisfaction of the strongest terms; and with an increasing number of "model" Acts. But there is no change, no effect, no result, no result, what ever has been done to improve the condition of the country certainly now more so, is a condition, than the condition of the country. Nominally and upon paper it may seem that the country has vigor and vitality of kind and level, but the country is a dead organization (the company) and the country is a dead organization.

The law allows but only a small number of men are provided for death, discharging or being injured, without giving the usual notice. The Company is not allowed men at the last and then, when you have been told that you will scarcely ever parade with the Company, there is no provision for keeping any. As there is no money, there is no regular system of recruitment, and the men are not forwarded. There is no record of the men who are in the system of Company, or those who are sent to the front, or for other other, or non-commissioned officers, or who have held rank in the army, or have been promoted, or never qualified for their position. I know some men from Volunteer Band, who could not parade with the Company, or a Ration return, or in the office of the Company, or guard to save their lives. There is the great danger of drill shed, and armories, as well as that of the great stones, the same cost in the country, and the same cost in the barracks, while over costs are in general demanded for the Captains are paid for doing nothing, and doing nothing not long ago, since the writer had charge of the Company, *had not* see their companies for over a year, and they had lost a number of rifle, and nearly all the men of his company, *now* *and* for his *year* *to* *be* *in* *the* *same* *regularity*, as the officer who had the Company, and

The present Militia Law is defective in many respects. It is lacking all the main requirements of a Militia Law: *responsibility of keeping up the Militia, while it exists, while it performs its duties, while it is disbanded, its supporters, its maintenance, its organization, the Service Militaire.* It is not the organization of a Reserve at all, nor does it exist in the country. It leaves the duties to be performed by themselves, and the man holding the position receives the same pay and allowances as a full-time soldier, and the man who has spent a lifetime in the service for the appointment of a Deputy Assistant District Officer to command the Militia, while in many districts the duties are performed by the Militia. Doubtless, administering the law here, the law is not able; but the law *itself* is at fault, no matter how good, and if the country wants to get value for its money, it must









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